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Full Occupancy at Rault Could Be Year Away

Rault Center owner Joseph M. Rault Jr. said today it probably will be a year before the fire-ravaged building will be fully occupied again.

He said, however, he hopes the building will be ready for some tenants to return in 60 to 90 days.

Rault, founder of the Lamplighter Club, was on hand today to welcome members to the opening of the club's temporary home in the basement of the Fairmont Roosevelt Hotel. The club has been without a home since it was gutted by the disastrous Nov. 29 fire on the 5th floor of the Rault Center.

Also present at the opening were Sen. and Mrs. Russell B. Long, who attended the club's initial opening when the Rault Center was completed five years ago.

Rault said engineers, contractors and insurance agents are still combing the building, assessing damage. He said actual reconstruction of the fire-damaged floors has not started.

Work at the building is limited largely to emergency repairs, such as removing debris and waterproofing, he said.

He said he does not know when the Lamplighter Club will return to the building.

Asked if he is considering installing a sprinkler system in the building, Rault said he would not comment on that until the probe of the fire is completed. "We're making a complete evaluation of the building," he said.

The temporary home of the Lamplighter Club is in the former discotheque of the Fairmont Roosevelt. It is equipped with a sprinkler system. The city's building code requires sprinklers in below-ground-level structures